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Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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Committee against Torture

Concluding observations on the second and third periodic reports of Bahrain*

1. The Committee against Torture considered the second and third periodic reports of Bahrain (CAT/C/BHR/2 and CAT/C/BHR/3) at its 1511th and 1514th meetings (see CAT/C/SR.1511 and 1514), held on 21 and 24 April 2017, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 1533rd and 1534th meetings, held on 8 and 9 May 2017.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee regrets the late submission of the second and third periodic reports, submitted in 2015 and 2016 respectively, 12 years after the consideration of the initial report. It welcomes the dialogue with the State party's delegation and the information provided orally in response to the concerns raised by the Committee.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the ratification of or accession to the following international instruments by the State party:

(a) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on 20 September 2006;

(b) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on 27 September 2007;

(c) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on 22 September 2011.

4. The Committee also welcomes the State party's initiatives to revise its legislation in areas of relevance to the Convention, including the adoption of:

(a) Royal Order No. 28 establishing the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, which was tasked with investigating and reporting on the events that took place in Bahrain in February and March 2011 and the consequences of those events, and making appropriate recommendations, in July 2011;

(b) Royal Order No. 45 establishing the National Commission to give effect to recommendation No. 1715 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, on 26 November 2011;

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixtieth session (18 April–12 May 2017).

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(c) Act No. 52 amending articles 208 and 232 of the Criminal Code to bring the definition of torture into line with the relevant provisions of the Convention and removing the statute of limitations for torture, on 3 October 2012;

(d) Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility Act No. 18, allowing lawyers representing inmates or persons in pretrial detention in criminal and civil cases to meet with their clients, in 2014.

5. The Committee further welcomes the State party's initiatives to amend its policies, programmes and administrative measures to give effect to the Convention, including the adoption of:

(a) Act No. 1 establishing the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons, in 2008;

(b) Royal Decree Law No. 30 establishing the National Fund for the Compensation of Victims, on 20 September 2011;

(c) Ministerial Decision No. 14 on the Code of Conduct for Police Officers, in January 2012.

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

Discrepancy between the legislative and institutional frameworks and their implementation in practice

6. While commending the establishment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and taking note of the amendments to national legislation concerning the definition of torture and the establishment of the institutional framework pursuant to the recommendations of the Commission, the Committee is concerned at the substantial gap between the amended legislative and institutional frameworks and their effective implementation in practice with regard to the obligations of the Convention (arts. 2, 4, 10 and 12-13).

7. **The State party should unambiguously proclaim at the highest level that torture will not be tolerated. It should take the necessary measures to narrow the gap between the legislative and institutional frameworks and their implementation in practice by, inter alia, announcing and ensuring that investigations and prosecutions will be carried out promptly against perpetrators of torture and those with command responsibility in all cases, and issuing a warning that anyone committing acts of torture or found to be otherwise complicit or acquiescent in acts of torture will be held personally responsible before the law and will be subject to criminal prosecution and appropriate penalties.**

Allegations of torture and ill-treatment and related impunity

8. While taking note that the State party set up the National Commission to follow up and implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, the Committee is concerned that there continue to be numerous and consistent allegations of widespread torture and ill-treatment of persons who are deprived of their liberty in all places of detention and elsewhere, particularly at the Criminal Investigations Directorate, at the moment of arrest, during pretrial detention and in prisons, in order to extract confessions or as punishment. It is also concerned at the climate of impunity which seems to prevail as a result of the low number of convictions for torture and the sentences given to persons responsible for torture resulting, inter alia, in death, which are not commensurate with the gravity of the crime (arts. 2, 4, 11-12 and 14-16).

9. **The State party should:**

(a) **Take additional measures to effectively implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, in particular recommendation No. 1719 on investigating cases of alleged torture and ill-treatment;**

(b) **Strengthen measures to prevent acts of torture and ill-treatment in all places where persons are deprived of their liberty;**

(c) **Take vigorous measures to eliminate impunity for acts of torture by holding alleged perpetrators accountable for such acts;**

(d) **Establish a plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.**

Military courts and the National Security Agency

10. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The amendment made in March 2017 to article 105 (b) of the Constitution and the amendments made in April 2017 to the Military Justice Code allowing for civilians to be tried in military courts for cases concerning a threat to national security, which appears to be contrary to recommendation No. 1720 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry;

(b) Allegations that trials that took place in military courts during the state of national safety were unfair and that the judgments reached were often based on coerced confessions;

(c) The restoration of law enforcement and arrest functions to the National Security Agency (arts. 2, 11-13 and 15-16).

11. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Consider repealing the legislative provisions concerning the trial of civilians by military courts and repeal the recent amendments to the Military Justice Code;**

(b) **Implement recommendation No. 1720 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and make subject to full review in the ordinary courts all convictions and sentences rendered by the National Safety Courts in which the fundamental principles of a fair trial, including prompt and full access to legal counsel and inadmissibility of coerced testimony, were not respected;**

(c) **Implement recommendation No. 1718 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and ensure that the National Security Agency is an intelligence gathering agency without law enforcement and arrest authorities.**

Resumption of the application of the death penalty

12. The Committee is gravely concerned about:

(a) The interruption by the State party of the de facto moratorium that had been in place since 2010 on the application of the death penalty, which led to the execution by firing squad on 15 January 2017 of Abbas al-Samea, Sami Mushaima and Ali al-Singace;

(b) Reports that the trials of the three men convicted of killing three police officers in 2014 were based on confessions obtained under torture, and the fact that the reports were not properly investigated by the competent authorities;

(c) The situation of Mohammed Ramadhan and Hussain Ali Moosa, who face the death penalty and are said to have been convicted on the basis of confessions extracted under torture (arts. 2, 11-13 and 15-16).

13. **The State party should:**

(a) **Consider the prompt re-establishment of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty;**

(b) **Consider, in that context, pardoning and reprieving all inmates currently on death row and commuting their sentences;**

(c) **Ensure that allegations by defendants that their confessions have been obtained under torture are properly investigated by competent bodies. No court**

rulings should be based on confessions obtained as a result of torture, which contravene article 15 of the Convention against Torture and the State party's Constitution and Criminal Code;

(d) Introduce a mandatory system of review of cases in which capital punishment has been handed down, with suspensive effect following a death penalty sentence in the first instance;

(e) Bring to the attention of judges that investigations and a new trial of Mohammed Ramadhan and Hussain Ali Moosa will be needed if coerced confessions were taken into account as evidence during their previous trial, guarantee the two men effective assistance by legal counsel at all stages of the new judicial proceedings and ensure the strict confidentiality of all meetings with their lawyers.

Fundamental legal safeguards

14. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) Allegations that most persons deprived of their liberty do not enjoy all fundamental legal safeguards from the moment of their apprehension;

(b) The fact that, while audiovisual equipment for recording interrogations of suspects and detainees has been installed in all police stations, at the General Department of Criminal Investigations and in interrogation rooms used by prosecutors, interrogations during which ill-treatment and torture are inflicted often occur in other parts of those facilities in order to avoid them being recorded (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

15. **The State party should take effective measures to guarantee that all detained persons are afforded in practice all the fundamental legal safeguards from the outset of their deprivation of liberty, in accordance with international standards, including the rights to:**

(a) Be informed about the charges against them, both orally and in writing, in a language that they understand, and to sign a document confirming that they have understood the information provided to them;

(b) Request and receive a medical examination by a qualified medical doctor within 24 hours of their arrival in a place of detention, and have access to an independent doctor upon their request;

(c) Have access to a lawyer or legal aid from the time of their apprehension and be able to consult with their lawyer in private throughout the proceedings against them, in accordance with article 20 of the Constitution;

(d) Notify a family member or any other person of their choice of their detention immediately after apprehension;

(e) Have their detention recorded in a central register immediately after arrest, and for the register to be accessible to their lawyers, family members and other persons concerned by the case;

(f) Be brought before a judge within 48 hours of their apprehension;

(g) Be interrogated, in all cases and in all places of deprivation of liberty, exclusively in interrogation rooms equipped for that purpose so that video recordings can be made and reviewed to identify and investigate any torture and other breaches of national legislation, have the recordings made available to them and their lawyers, and have the recordings used as evidence in court.

Forced confessions

16. Despite the existing national legislation, the Committee remains concerned at numerous reports of the continued widespread use of forced confessions as evidence in courts and at the absence of information of any cases in which officials have been prosecuted and punished for extracting confessions in violation of article 15 of the Convention. It is also concerned at the widespread acceptance by judges of forced

confessions, the fact that some individuals are reported to have been sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment on the basis of confessions made under torture, and the refusal of judges to take into account in court visible signs of torture shown by the defendants. It is particularly concerned that the sentences of the three persons who were executed on 15 January 2017 are reported to have been based on confessions extracted under torture (arts. 2 and 12-16).

17. **The State party should implement the relevant provisions of its Code of Criminal Procedure, including article 253, and ensure that evidence obtained through any form of coercion or torture is inadmissible in all judicial proceedings, in line with article 15 of the Convention. It should enact legislation providing for inquiries into well-founded allegations of torture that are brought to the judge's attention by the defendant or their counsel. Judges should review cases of convictions based solely on confessions, since many may have been based on evidence obtained through torture and ill-treatment, and the State party should inform the Committee of the results of the review. The State party should conduct prompt and impartial investigations into such cases, take appropriate remedial measures and provide the Committee with information on whether any officials have been prosecuted and punished for extracting such confessions.**

Duration of pretrial detention

18. While noting that the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that law enforcement officials should hand suspects over to the public prosecution within 24 hours of apprehension and that detention warrants issued by the public prosecution are valid for seven days only following the handover of the suspect, the Committee is concerned that the public prosecution can submit an application to a lower court judge to issue a warrant for up to a further 15 days, or for successive periods amounting in total to not more than 30 days. It is also concerned that article 147 of the Code of Criminal Procedure allows for detention on remand that can be imposed by a lower court for a period or consecutive periods of up to 30 days on condition that no period exceeds 15 days. It is particularly concerned that chapter I of the special section of the Criminal Code concerning State security offences allows the public prosecution to detain a suspect for an initial period of 28 days or for up to six months under the Act on the Protection of Society from Terrorist Acts (arts. 2, 4, 11 and 16).

19. **The State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that persons who are arrested on criminal charges, including under the Act on the Protection of Society from Terrorist Acts, are brought before a judge within 48 hours;**

(b) **Amend its legislation and take all necessary measures to shorten the duration of pretrial detention, which should be used as an exception, as a measure of last resort and applied for limited periods of time;**

(c) **Ensure that pretrial detention is regulated clearly and subject to judicial supervision at all times in order to guarantee fundamental legal safeguards;**

(d) **Consider replacing pretrial detention for minor crimes with non-custodial measures, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules);**

(e) **Ensure that redress, including compensation, is provided to victims of unjustified prolonged pretrial detention.**

Solitary confinement

20. While national law has prescribed since 2014, under the Reform and Rehabilitation Institution Act, that solitary confinement should not last for more than seven days, the Committee is concerned about the actual use of solitary confinement in different detention centres as punishment for prolonged periods of time. It is particularly concerned about the solitary confinement of Nabeel Rajab, which is reported to have exceeded nine months and during which he has been denied adequate medical care. The Committee draws the State party's attention to the fact that excessive use of solitary confinement constitutes cruel,

inhuman or degrading punishment or, depending on the circumstances, torture (arts. 2, 11-13 and 16).

21. **The State party should:**

(a) **Effectively implement current national legislation in order to ensure that solitary confinement remains an exceptional measure, imposed for as short a time as possible and is used as a measure of last resort, in accordance with international standards;**

(b) **Ensure that solitary confinement is kept under strict supervision and judicial review, that it never lasts longer than provided for by law and that the detainees are guaranteed due process rights, such as the right to appeal;**

(c) **Establish clear and specific criteria for decisions on isolation and ensure that the practice of renewing and prolonging solitary confinement is strictly prohibited;**

(d) **Ensure that the detainee's physical and mental condition is monitored daily by qualified medical personnel throughout the period of solitary confinement, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules);**

(e) **Put an end to the solitary confinement of Nabeel Rajab and ensure that he is provided with adequate medical assistance and redress.**

Conditions of detention

22. While taking note of information about the construction of new buildings to accommodate inmates, the Committee is concerned that overcrowding remains a problem in detention facilities. It is also concerned at reports of poor material and hygiene conditions in places of detention, including inadequate bathing and toilet facilities, lack of access to adequate quantities of food and to good quality food, lack of access to health care, lack of outdoor activities and unnecessary restrictions on family visits (arts. 2, 11-14 and 16).

23. **The State party should:**

(a) **Intensify its efforts to bring the conditions of detention in places of deprivation of liberty into line with the Nelson Mandela Rules and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules);**

(b) **Further reduce prison overcrowding in all places of detention, including by building additional facilities, renovating existing ones and reducing the rate of incarceration;**

(c) **Ensure that detainees are provided with adequate material and hygiene conditions, including bathing and toilet facilities, adequate quantities of good quality food, space per prisoner, health care, outdoor activities and family visits;**

(d) **Allow independent monitoring bodies, including international bodies, to carry out regular unannounced visits to all places of detention and to meet in private with detained persons.**

Riots in prisons

24. The Committee is concerned at reports of outbreaks of violence by inmates in prisons resulting in riots and inmates escaping, as was the case in Jaw Prison in March 2015 and January 2017 and in Dry Dock Prison in 2016. The reports make reference to the excessive use of force by security forces in Jaw Prison, including their use of rubber bullets, tear gas and shotguns, as well as the harsh treatment of the detainees by the prison administration, which included forcing inmates to spend 10 days in the open courtyard and the transfer of 100 detainees to another section of the prison where they were reportedly subjected to collective punishment amounting to ill-treatment and torture. It has been

reported that a number of prisoners were given increased sentences as a result of those events (arts. 2, 11-14 and 16).

25. **The State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that the use of force by security forces in places of detention during security operations is not excessive and that tear gas is not fired in closed spaces to quell riots, which endangers the lives of the inmates;**

(b) **Ensure that the basic rights of detainees are maintained in all circumstances and that detainees are not subjected to collective punishment by the prison administration;**

(c) **Ensure that effective investigations are conducted into all cases of violence and that conditions of detention do not provoke riots by the inmates;**

(d) **Ensure that thorough investigations are conducted into all allegations of torture and ill-treatment committed in detention facilities, punish any perpetrators who are found guilty and provide redress, including medical and psychological rehabilitation, to the victims.**

Treatment of minors

26. The Committee is concerned that the minimum age of criminal responsibility is 7 years and that minors over 16 years of age are in fact regarded as adult offenders, which increases their exposure to the risk of torture and ill-treatment. The Committee is also concerned at reports that 76 minors were detained during security operations in 2010 and that, of the cases of torture submitted to a non-governmental organization between 1 January and 26 June 2016, 10 involved individuals who were minors at the time of arrest. It is also concerned that minors were among the inmates against whom tear gas was used during the riot in Jaw Prison in 2015. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that, of some 200 minors who were incarcerated in 2015, about half were detained in facilities for adults, sometimes owing to overcrowding (arts. 2, 11-13 and 16).

27. **The State party should:**

(a) **Amend its legislation with a view to raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 12 years, as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its general comment No. 10 (2007) on children's rights in juvenile justice;**

(b) **Ensure the full implementation of juvenile justice standards and of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty;**

(c) **Ensure that minors are detained as a last resort only and for the shortest possible period and that they are separated from adults and afforded full legal safeguards, and use non-custodial measures for minors who are in conflict with the law.**

Independent complaints mechanisms in places of detention

28. While noting that persons deprived of their liberty can file complaints about torture or ill-treatment with a number of bodies created pursuant to the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, such as the Office of the Ombudsman (General Secretariat of Complaints) of the Ministry of the Interior, the Directorate of Internal Investigations of the Ministry of the Interior, the General Directorate of Reform and Rehabilitation of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ombudsman's Office of the National Security Agency, the Special Investigation Unit in the Public Prosecutor's Office, the National Institution for Human Rights and the Prisoners' and Detainees' Rights Commission, the Committee is concerned that those bodies are not independent, that their mandates are unclear and overlap, and that they are not effective given that complaints ultimately pass through the Ministry of the Interior. It is also concerned that their activities have had little or no effect, and that the authorities provided negligible information

regarding the outcome of their activities. The Committee is further concerned about the loopholes in the existing complaints mechanisms whereby prison inmates have to submit complaints regarding torture or ill-treatment through prison wardens, the prison Director or Deputy Director, which does not guarantee that the complaints will be submitted to the competent authorities (arts. 2, 4, 11-14 and 16).

29. **The State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that all mechanisms empowered to consider complaints by pretrial detainees and convicted prisoners in all places of detention are independent;**

(b) **Ensure that all reports of torture or ill-treatment are investigated promptly, effectively and impartially by an independent mechanism in which there is no institutional or hierarchical connection between the investigators and the alleged perpetrators;**

(c) **Ensure that all persons under investigation for having committed acts of torture or ill-treatment are immediately suspended from their duties and remain so throughout the investigation, while ensuring that the principle of presumption of innocence is observed;**

(d) **Facilitate the submission of complaints by victims of torture and ill-treatment, including by obtaining medical evidence in support of their allegations from competent and independent doctors, in keeping with the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Protocol);**

(e) **Ensure in practice that complainants in all places of detention are protected against any reprisals as a consequence of their complaint.**

Monitoring of places of detention

30. While noting that visits to places of detention can be undertaken by the President of the Supreme Court of Appeal, the President of the High Criminal Court, the sentencing judge, the President of the Juvenile Court, the public prosecution and the accountability mechanisms created pursuant to the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, the Committee is concerned that law enforcement and prison officials continue to engage in conduct that is contrary to the Convention (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

31. **The State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that an effective and independent monitoring system regularly inspects all places of detention, without prior notice, and is able to meet in private with detainees, receive complaints and conduct investigations into alleged conduct by law enforcement and prison officials that is contrary to the Convention;**

(b) **Strengthen cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms by permitting visits as soon as possible by special procedure mandate holders who have requested them, in conformity with the revised terms of reference for country visits by special procedure mandate holders of the United Nations Human Rights Council (based on E/CN.4/1998/45, appendix V);**

(c) **Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which provides for international and national mechanisms for the prevention of torture in places where persons are deprived of their liberty.**

Reprisals and alleged torture and ill-treatment of human rights defenders and journalists

32. The Committee remains concerned at numerous and consistent allegations of serious acts of intimidation, reprisals, threats, revocation of citizenship as a reprisal and arrests and arbitrary imprisonment of human rights defenders, journalists and their relatives in retaliation for their work. It is also concerned that many such individuals have reportedly faced arrest on criminal charges and have been placed on trial without due process of law

and without benefiting from fundamental legal safeguards. The Committee is deeply concerned by reports that numerous persons who were deprived of their liberty have been subjected to torture or ill-treatment. It is particularly concerned about the situation of Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Naji Fateel, Nabeel Rajab, Abduljalil al-Singace, Hussain Jawad and Abdulwahab Hussain, especially with regard to their access to medical care (arts. 2-3, 11-14 and 16).

33. **The State party should:**

(a) **Implement recommendation No. 1722 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry with regard to the use of force, arrest, treatment of persons in custody, detention and prosecution in connection with the exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association;**

(b) **Release from detention human rights defenders and journalists who have allegedly been detained and imprisoned in retaliation for their work, including Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Naji Fateel, Nabeel Rajab, Abduljalil al-Singace, Hussain Jawad and Abdulwahab Hussain;**

(c) **Investigate promptly, thoroughly and impartially all allegations of harassment, arbitrary arrest, torture or ill-treatment of human rights defenders and journalists, prosecute and punish appropriately those found guilty while ensuring that they have access to justice and are guaranteed fundamental legal safeguards, and provide redress to the victims;**

(d) **Refrain from using revocation of citizenship as a form of reprisal against human rights defenders, journalists and any other critics who are political activists and not in favour of the authorities.**

Violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence

34. The Committee is concerned that violence against women, including marital rape and domestic violence, are not separate crimes in the Criminal Code, and at the delay in the adoption of legislation in that regard. It is particularly concerned that article 353 of the Criminal Code exempts perpetrators of rape from prosecution and punishment if they marry their victims, and that article 334 reduces the penalties for perpetrators of crimes committed in the name of so-called honour (arts. 2, 12-14 and 16).

35. **The State party should:**

(a) **Define and include domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape, as specific criminal offences in its Criminal Code, with appropriate sanctions;**

(b) **Amend the Criminal Code in order to repeal articles 334 and 353;**

(c) **Expedite the adoption of the bill on domestic violence, on which drafting began in 2007;**

(d) **Ensure that all allegations of violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence, are registered by the police and that all allegations of violence are promptly, impartially and effectively investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted and punished;**

(e) **Ensure that victims of domestic violence benefit from protection, including restraining orders, and have access to medical and legal services, including counselling, redress and rehabilitation, as well as safe and adequate government-funded shelters throughout the country;**

(f) **Provide mandatory training for police and other law enforcement officials, social workers, prosecutors and judges on the vulnerabilities of victims of gender-based and domestic violence.**

Corporal punishment of children

36. The Committee is concerned at reports that corporal punishment of children is still permitted in the home, in alternative care and day-care settings and in penal institutions (arts. 2, 4 and 16).

37. **The State party should enact legislation to explicitly and clearly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings.**

Compensation to victims of torture and ill-treatment

38. While welcoming the creation of the National Fund for the Compensation of Victims and the establishment of special courts devoted to hearing compensation claims, which was announced on 27 February 2012 by the Supreme Judicial Council, the Committee is concerned that compensation has been paid to only some of the victims and families of victims identified by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (art. 14).

39. **The State party should ensure that the National Fund for the Compensation of Victims provides compensation to all victims of torture and ill-treatment entitled to receive it, including all those identified by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.**

Visits by United Nations human rights mechanisms

40. The Committee is concerned that, despite repeated requests to visit the country by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the State party postponed the visit, claiming that it had come at an inopportune time on account of its efforts to implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and a far-reaching process of reform and development. The Committee is also concerned that the representatives of the State party were not able to indicate when the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would be permitted to visit the country in response to the invitation the Parliament of Bahrain issued through the media to visit places of detention and Shia villages in Bahrain. The invitation had been accepted by the High Commissioner, but the Government of Bahrain had taken no action in that regard at the time of the dialogue with the Committee.

41. **The Committee recommends that the State party promptly accept the request of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to visit the country. The State party is encouraged to enable the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit the country, particularly its places of detention, which are a matter of relevance to the compliance by Bahrain with the provisions of the Convention.**

Follow-up procedure

42. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, by 12 May 2018, information on follow-up to the Committee's recommendations on the moratorium on the death penalty, regular visits by independent monitoring bodies, including international bodies, to places of detention, and visits by the United Nations human rights mechanisms (see paras. 13 (a), 23 (d) and 41 above). In that context, the State party is invited to inform the Committee about its plans for implementing, within the coming reporting period, some or all of the remaining recommendations in the concluding observations.**

Other issues

43. **The Committee reiterates its recommendation (see CAT/C/CR/34/BHR, para. 9) that the State party consider making the declarations under articles 21 and 22 of the Convention and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention.**

44. **The Committee invites the State party to ratify the core United Nations human rights treaties to which it is not yet party.**

45. **The State party is requested to disseminate widely the report submitted to the Committee and the present concluding observations, in appropriate languages, through official websites, the media and non-governmental organizations.**

46. **The State party is invited to submit its next periodic report by 12 May 2021. To that end, and in view of the fact that the State party has agreed to report to the Committee under the simplified reporting procedure, the Committee will, in due course, transmit to the State party a list of issues prior to reporting. The State party's replies to that list of issues will constitute its fourth periodic report under article 19 of the Convention.**